



Testimony of Kristin Ferguson  
**In Support of HB 6664 AN ACT CONCERNING  
RESTRAINING ORDERS**

Honorable members of the Committee, my name is Kristin Ferguson, and I am the Assistant Director for the New Britain and Hartford Sexual Assault Crisis Service, a program of the YWCA New Britain. I am writing in full support of HB 6664 AN ACT CONCERNING MAKING RESTRAINING ORDERS MORE ACCESSIBLE. The YWCA New Britain provides services to all towns in Hartford County plus Plymouth and part of Tolland County, including responding directly to 14 hospitals throughout the state, 4 of which are part of the Gail Burns Smith SAFE Program.

Sexual violence is becoming better understood than it was years ago. However, society continues to falsely portray sexual violence to happen only in dark alleys and isolated areas by obviously creepy, abnormal perverts, or by those who could be easily identified or avoided<sup>1</sup>. According to CONNSACS National Statistics on Sexual Violence, in eight out of ten sexual violence cases, the victim knows their perpetrator<sup>2</sup>. Unfortunately, sexual violence can occur anywhere at any time. The majority of sexual violence occurs in places ordinarily thought to be safe, such as homes, cars and offices<sup>3</sup>. CONN. GEN. STAT. § 46b-15 (a) currently protects any victim of sexual violence who is assaulted by a family or household member, or has recently been in a dating relationship with the person<sup>4</sup>. Each year we as sexual assault advocates are faced with the hardship of multiple sexual violence victims being denied the opportunity to be granted a restraining order because their perpetrator was someone they knew but did not fall under the categories listed in CONN. GEN. STAT. § 46b-15 (a).

Currently, sexual violence victims have the opportunity to be granted a protective order, as long as there is an arrest made. From my experience as an advocate, the steps leading up to the arrest are the scariest part for the victim. They fear retaliation once their perpetrator knows they made a police report, they have trouble sleeping for fear the perpetrator is going to come back or find out where the victim is staying. HB 6664 would help sexual violence victims to feel better protected and more confident in the justice system. For some it may even help increase the 2000 study statistic from the Bureau of Justice showing only 28% of victims report to police<sup>5</sup>.

Sexual violence is a horrific crime, and it is an ordeal that no one should ever have to deal with. I ask that you consider the rights of the individuals who have been victimized and please support strengthening sexual violence laws to protect victims from the beginning to end of their process.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you would like to discuss this matter any further I can be reached at (860) 225-4681 EXT 217

Regards,

Kristin Ferguson  
Assistant Director  
YWCA New Britain- Sexual Assault Crisis Services

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<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Service. "National Statistics on Sexual Violence" (2000)

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> ibid

<sup>4</sup> CONN. GEN. STAT. § 46b-15 (a)

<sup>5</sup> Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Service. "National Statistics on Sexual Violence" (2000)